

REMARKS

Claims 1-7 were previously pending in this application. Claims 1-7 are rejected.
Claim 6 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejections under 35 USC

112.

Claims 1-7 are rejected under 35 USC 112.

Claims 1, 3-5 and 7 are rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Pat. No. 5,937,223 to Akimoto ("Akimoto").

Claim 2 is rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Pat. No. 5,937,223 to Akimoto ("Akimoto"), in view of U.S. Pat. No. 5,963,753 to Ohtani et al ("Ohtani").

Claims 1-2 and 5 are amended.

New claims 8-9 are added. No new matter is added.

Claims 1-9 remain in the case for reconsideration.

Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 1-7 are rejected under 35 USC 112, first paragraph.

The rejections are respectfully traversed.

The Examiner states that "the best mode contemplated by the inventor has not been disclosed" and "the applicant has not disclosed the means that would enable the coating means and developing means to perform the carrying function as claimed."

The Applicant believes the rejection was in error. Indeed, the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. § 112 that requires disclosing the best mode speaks only to the *specification*, not to the *claims*. Nevertheless, claim 1 is amended to further clarify the patentable subject matter of the claimed invention. In particular, claim 1 now recites:

"A semiconductor manufacturing apparatus for a photolithographic process including a coating process and a developing process, the apparatus comprising:
a first port where a substrate comes in and goes out;

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a second port, having a constant distance from the first port, where the substrate comes in and goes out;

coating means for performing the coating process; and

developing means for performing the developing process, the developing means being stacked in parallel with the coating means,

wherein the coating means includes:

a first conveyance path extending horizontally for coupling the first port to the second port;

a coating module arranged along one side of the first conveyance path extending horizontally; and

a first carrier, which moves between the first port and the second port via the first conveyance path, for carrying a substrate to the first port or the second port of the coating module.

Furthermore, the claimed invention is supported, for example, in the specification at page 5, lines 15-20 and shown in FIGS. 3-5. The robot 62 is shown to carry the substrate on path 60 and the robot 82 is shown to carry the substrate on path 80. Furthermore, it is known to those skilled in the art at the time the claimed invention was made that a wafer can be transferred from one place to another by a carrier such as a robot for various processing steps. Such techniques can be found in, for example, U.S. Pat. Nos 5,919,529 and 5,963,753. For these reasons, those skilled in the art would be able to understand the structure necessary to carry out the carrying functions as claimed and thus would be able to practice the claimed invention in view of the present disclosure.

Thus, the rejections under 35 USC 112 are overcome.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 1, 3-5 and 7 are rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Pat. No. 5,937,223 to Akimoto ("Akimoto").

The rejections are respectfully traversed.

As discussed above, claim 1 is now amended to recite:

"the coating means includes:

a first conveyance path extending horizontally for coupling the first port to the second port;

a coating module arranged along one side of the first conveyance path extending horizontally; and

a first carrier, which moves between the first port and the second port via the first conveyance path, for carrying a substrate to the first port or the second port of the coating module.”

Akimoto does *not* teach or disclose the above limitations of the claimed invention. In contrast, among others, Akimoto merely teaches a transport path extending *vertically* as indicated in FIG. 12 and the throughout the specification including all independent claims.

Thus, the rejections under 35 USC 102(b) are overcome and claims 1, 3-5 and 7 are allowable.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103(a)

Claim 2 is rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Pat. No. 5,937,223 to Akimoto ("Akimoto"), in view of U.S. Pat. No. 5,963,753 to Ohtani et al ("Ohtani").

The rejections are respectfully traversed.

As discussed above, Akimoto fails to teach or disclose the limitations of claim 1. Akimoto merely teaches a conveyance path extending vertically. Thus, nothing in Akimoto teaches or suggests the limitations of claim 2, for example,

“the developing means includes:

a second conveyance path extending horizontally for coupling the first port to the second port;

a developing module which is arranged along one side of the second conveyance path; and

a second carrier, which moves between the first port and the second port via the second conveyance path, for carrying the substrate to the first port or the second port or the developing module.”

As to new claims 8 and 9, for the reasons discussed above, none of the cited references including Akimoto teaches or discloses 1) a bake unit which is arranged at the other side of the second path and opposite to the developer or 2) the first and the second path extend parallel with each other. Thus, new claims 8 and 9, which depend from allowable 1, are also allowable.

Allowable Subject Matter

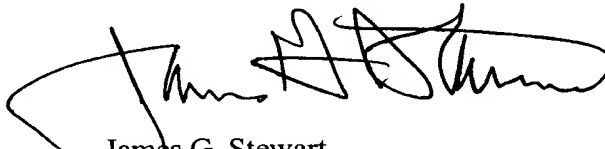
Applicant thanks the Examiner's indication that claim 6 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejections under 35 USC 112. Claim 6 is allowable because claim 1, which claim 6 depends from, is allowable over 35 USC 112 as discussed above.

Conclusion

Reconsideration and allowance of all claims is thus respectfully requested in light of the above comments. The Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned if any questions remain about allowability of the claims.

The Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned at (503) 222-3613 if it appears that an interview would be helpful in advancing the case.

Respectfully submitted,



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